

# AHEgradLink

Volume 2, Issue 1

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*Special points of interest:*

- **AHE Focus Group Formed**
- **AHE Focus Group Develop AHE Mission Statement**
- **Master Hunter Re-certification Hours—Potential Increase**
- **Possible new Mentoring Program**

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## ADVANCED HUNTER EDUCATION FOCUS GROUP FORMED

The Advanced Hunter Education Program formed the AHE Focus Group in Spring of 2003. The AHE Focus Group was formed to provide advice and feedback to WDFW, review, improve, and reinvigorate the AHE program.

In early 2003, Chuck Ray AHE Program Manager, solicited interested Master Hunters for the job. Applicants were required to submit a resume on their backgrounds to Chuck. From the applications submitted, Chuck Ray selected twelve members for the Focus Group. The group is comprised of six members from the west side of the state and six from the east side repre-

senting each of the State's geographical areas. Members of the AHE Focus Group are: Bob Holtfreter Ph.D - Yakima, Paul Crosby M.D.-Greenacres, Russell Madison - Selah, John Britton - Spokane, Ray Boone - Leavenworth, Francis Benjamin - Pullman, Brian Davern - Vancouver, Dustin Albright - Oak Harbor, Mike Parris - Poulsbo, Chuck Wheeler - Lacey, Robert Laughery - Everett and George Coulbourn - Black Diamond. The group meet three times during the summer of 2003 with Dave Ware, Game Division Program Manager and Chuck Ray, AHE Program Manager. The group discussed numer-

### **AHE MISSION STATEMENT**

***The mission of the Master Hunter Program is to promote wildlife conservation and the hunting tradition through example, education and mentorship, with a focus on high ethical standards and landowner relations.***

ous items such as; the role of the focus group, overview of the current program, vision for the future of the AHE program, and 2003 hunting opportunities. The also developed the Mission Statement for the program.

## **WDFW NEEDS HELP FROM MASTER HUNTERS !**

**By: Jeff Bernatowicz**

In Washington, elk are a prized big game animal that are a source of considerable recreation. One fundamental measure of an elk population's well-being is reproductive success, often referred to as "recruitment". When

habitat conditions are good, cow elk can acquire the needed nutrients to successfully rear a calf. If abundant quality forage is available, they may also be able to store adequate energy reserves (fat) to assure breeding again that

autumn.

Autumn fat levels among cow elk are a very good predictor of the likelihood of successful breeding and of prevailing habitat quality. One very

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## MORE NOTES FROM THE AHE FOCUS GROUP



*Master hunters are held to the highest ethical standards while hunting, fishing or trapping and are expected to respect all recreational and trapping laws!*

The objectives of the Focus Group are to improve land-owner-sportsman relations, increase hunter knowledge and expand opportunities/hunter access.

The group's vision for the future of the program is to focus on private lands and problems, improve the public's impression of hunters, and to target ethics, volunteerism and proficiency.

The mission of the program will include: increased knowledge and promote wildlife conservation, provide mentoring opportunities, maintain and promote the hunting traditions for the future, maintain ethical standards of hunting, fostering landowner relationships and provide AHE ownership of the program.

Recommended Goals of the group are: to promote, protect

and preserve ethical hunting opportunity in the State of Washington, to improve land-owner-sportsmen relations, to increase hunter knowledge in the areas of wildlife, related wildlife and hunting issues and wildlife laws and regulations, to expand hunting opportunities and/or hunter access to private lands, to increase the number of AHE graduates and utilize the potential of the Master Hunter graduates.

Some of the recommended incentives from the group are to provide hunting opportunities that require mentoring as an aspect, sportsfest type of program that would utilize Master Hunters as mentors, provide incentives for AHE graduates to get others involved or to pass the course.

As you can see some of the

ideas overlap, but these are just a few of the ideas the focus group came up with.

### **ADVANCED HUNTER EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT**

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## **WDFW NEEDS HELP FROM MASTER HUNTERS !**

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good, simple, and inexpensive method used by biologist to estimate cow elk body conditions is to assess fat levels deposited around specific internal organs...namely, the heart and kidneys.

Every autumn, elk hunters take

to the field and harvest cow elk across the state of Washington. These harvested elk can provide valuable information about prevailing elk body condition patterns. To reliably assess condition, biologist need to examine the amount of fat covering both the **heart and the membrane**

**covering the heart** (the pericardium), **and** they need to assess the amount of fat covering **both kidneys**. Two additional pieces of information help interpret autumn fat levels in cow elk: the cow's age, and whether the cow nursed a calf the pre-

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# WDFW NEEDS HELP FROM MASTER HUNTERS !

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ceding summer (a skinny cow elk that nursed a calf all summer means something different than a skinny cow that was barren). A tooth from the harvested elk can be used to estimate its age, and a careful examination of the udder can determine whether the cow recently nursed a calf.

Currently, WDFW biologist are attempting to assess the nutritional status of elk from the

Colockum and Yakima elk herds by collecting information from hunter harvested elk. Although useful data have been acquired, WDFW would like to increase both hunter participation and sample collection efficiency. To date, only a fraction of the successful hunters have complied with the request for samples, and many samples received have been incomplete (for example, a heart but no kidneys...a heart, but no pericardium). WDFW is hoping ad-

vanced hunters can help collect the much needed data.

If you are successful in harvesting a cow elk (samples from calves are not needed) from GMU's 328-368, or hunt areas 3911 or 3912, please collect the heart, pericardium, and both kidneys with accompanying fat. The assessment requires examining fat surrounding the kidneys and it is critical that hunters do not trim fat off the kid-

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What will the future hold for hunting as we know it?

## MENTORING \*\*\* A NEW DIRECTION FOR AHE? \*\*\*

What is the future of hunting in this state or the nation? Recent history tells us that fewer people hunt now than in the past. How do we know? Hunting license sales have been down in the recent past. As sportsman/hunter, what can we do or what should we do to change this trend? What is our

obligation if any?

AHE staff are looking at an additional direction for the AHE program and the AHE graduate. Staff feel the addition of a mentoring program might be a natural extension or direction for the program to follow. Many of you possess the skills, the knowledge and the means

to pass the tradition of hunting onto the younger generation as well as to individuals new to hunting. There are many opportunities for us to participate as mentors to our youth as well as adults via first time hunts or training seminars. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Chuck Ray.



Master Hunters are like a good pointer....they are dedicated to the sport!

## MASTER HUNTER RE-CERTIFICATION

Recently there has been a lot of confusion regarding re-certification in the AHE program. AHE staff have received many calls and e-mails from graduates wanting to know when and how to renew their certification. All graduates should have a Master Hunter

certification card and on that card is an expiration date. At this time, certification in the program is good for five years. Before the end of five years you will need to renew your certification by participating in an additional twelve hours of conservation work in the field on a

habitat or wildlife related project. If the project is with a private landowner or your own, you will need to have it pre-approved by Chuck Ray. If you need a new card or conservation form please contact Chuck Ray or the Olympia office to request a replacement.

*You will not receive a notice from Olympia regarding the expiration of your AHE certification! Your renewal date is on your certification card.*

# THE NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION MODEL

## Triumph For Man and Nature

### By: Shane Mahoney—Article from RMEF *Bugle* Journal

This is part one of a three part series.

*Henry David Thoreau once said, "If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them."*

*Nothing could better describe the pattern and process of creating the most successful wildlife conservation program in the world, the North American Wildlife Conservation Model. Begun well over a century ago, this guiding philosophical framework rescued wildlife from slaughter and restored to this continent an astounding natural abundance. Its achievements can only be understood against the backdrop of the destruction that took 40 million buffalo to the brink of doom and 5 billion passenger pigeons beyond it.*

*Without the revolution in values and the entirely new approach to wildlife use that first emerged in the 1830's, we would today face a continent without white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, wild turkeys, wood ducks and hundreds of other cherished life forms. This history is entirely lost to the great majority, not well known by many, and well understood by far too few. What is most regrettable is that modern society, energized as it is for the conservation of nature, has no understanding that hunters and anglers led the revolution to save wildlife on the North American continent and remain today the most stalwart of support.*

#### The Formative Years

As human kind wanders beyond the frontier of the 20th century, we look ahead to a time of uncertainty and enormous challenge. On diverse fronts-economic, political and social-there is an arresting escarpment of deep-set realities that collectively threaten the future of us all. At the same time those challenges call upon the unshakable flow of human creativity and our nearly perverse capacity to rise beyond defeat and turn aside what appears to be the inevitable outcomes of history. These truths collide with clarion force at the edge of humanity's greatest challenge; namely, how to sustain ourselves in a natural world that only we can protect. Nature and wildness, we know, must be maintained if civilized society, indeed our very humanness, is to survive. Yet it is our humanness-embodied in successful reproduction and a constant demand for finite resources-that imperils all of wild nature. We dance on the head of a pin. Yet we have faced such challenge before, and out of our deliberations created the most successful conservation strategy of all time.

In 1871 a new monthly newspaper appeared in the United States. It was called the *American Sportsman*. In hindsight, what may have seemed just another example of American entrepreneurial effort represented, in fact, an amazing shift in social and civic conscience that would ordain the rescue and support of wildlife for generations to come. Although clearly not consistent with nature in the name of civilized progress, there was emerging in the United States (and to a lesser degree in Canada) a minority who considered the aristocratic "hunter nobility" of European alluring model in the new post-Civil War society. In the New World everyone could be an achieving capitalist, after all, but someone

had to take responsibility for establishing and preserving traditions.

Emerging simultaneously was a powerful and growing recognition that animal populations once considered limitless were, in fact, exhaustible, and that the commercial exploitation of these resources was rapidly leading to local depletions and even national extinctions. Bison, elk and pronghorn were tumbling to scarcity for their meat, bone, hides and teeth; egrets and other shorebirds for their plumage. Beaver were moving toward extirpation east of the Rocky Mountains and wild turkeys and white-tailed deer were clinging perilously to the swamps and cane brakes of the South. The concerns of sportsmen grew in scale and scope as their favored haunts were laid bare of wild nature and their passionate experience with it was forfeited to those who viewed the financial value of the dead animal as the only goal worth pursuing. In the glazed eyes of fallen nature was foreshadowed the end of a way of life, of something precious and irreplaceable. The personal relevance of both man and wild nature were now at issue.

Suddenly there was both a cause and a concern. Sportsmen's voices echoed across the continent, engendering new publications such as *Forest and Stream* (1873) *Field and Stream* (1874) and *American Angler* (1881), and demanding that a codified approach to the taking of wildlife be established, a prescription for both human conduct and motivation. Wild beast and fishes were to be taken only in the measure of what a man could use, and not by what he could sell. The rhetoric may have been better than the practice of course, but there can be no doubt that this fledgling philosophy was just that, a new way of seeing wildlife in the New World. Indeed it was a new way of seeing it even by world standards, for while the European gentleman hunter was an elite by right, the North American democracies of Canada and the United States demanded that he be one by conviction. North American hunters and anglers thus began a crusade for wildlife and hunting both, not just as a means of preserving their own access to wild nature in the manner they chose, but also as a means of preserving wild nature in such abundance that permitted future generations their own prerogatives and positions.

Thus did the hunters-naturalists of mid-19th century America launch both an intellectual and social revolution. Their concerns for preserving traditions and for embellishing their physical undertakings in the field with an awareness that they stood for something greater than themselves represented a classic incarnation. Suddenly wildlife, for a growing number of people was becoming tied to their personal identity, their sense of nationhood and civic responsibility. Conserving nature was becoming a matter of national importance. Hunters and anglers were not yet certain of how they would make it so, but their unrelenting passion for recreation afield and for the news conser-

vation ethic meant that inevitably it would infiltrate the ranks of the political elites. Through their magazines and hunting clubs, they spread the gospel of personal restraint and thoughtful consideration in the taking of wildlife. They were more than just meat hunters and far more than the despised market hunters-they were the protectors of the new resource. Yes, they clearly had a vested interest, but one that was in the best interest of all. Hunters and anglers could, and would, do right by doing what they loved. It really was a New World, and the frontier of citizen leadership was to be nowhere more decisively delivered than in the arena of wildlife conservation.

By the 1860's, and for the three decades that followed, the efforts of hunters and anglers in the United States were not only pervasive, they were well organized. The passionate commitment to resource conservation was matched by an enduring pragmatism that saw grassroots political establishments as a key to long-term success. Given the time and conditions for communication and coalition building, we can only marvel at what sportsmen achieved in time of Custer's defeat at Little Bighorn, hunters and anglers had already established nearly 500 associations of various kinds dedicated to resisting further loss of wildlife populations and restoring those that had been depleted.

And hunters and anglers did not intend to wait for the perfect circumstances. True, it would have been advantageous for infrastructures to have been in place at federal or state levels, where the responsibility for wildlife resided; but the reality was that no such framework existed. It was up to the individual-organized in groups of diverse person but of common purpose-to force social awareness in the right direction. And sportsmen led this charge by what Mark Twain called the "hardest thing in life to put up with," namely, the setting of a good example. Sportsmen's groups lobbied everywhere for new legislation and for enforcement of existing laws. They urged restraint, not only upon others but upon themselves. The significance of such efforts can hardly be overestimated and remains the most striking evidence for something truly new and revolutionary in the emerging hunter-conservationist code.

Consider the irony, the sheer contrariness of this agenda of "measured take." In the absence of any social mores or local regional or national laws to the contrary-and yet in the presence of nationalistic doctrines espousing personal freedom, entrepreneurship and the moral imperative of subduing nature-hunters and anglers, out of passion for nature and their engagements with it, hounded legislators to enact and enforce laws that restricted the very activities hunters and anglers were so passionate about! No more precise exemplar exist of how the common good could be served by conscientious individualism. Equally

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## POTENTIAL CHANGE FOR RE-CERTIFICATION HOURS

One of the recommendations made by the AHE Focus Group, was to increase the re-certification hours to at least 30 hours. These hours would be done over the five year certification period. Your Master Hunter certification is good for five years. To renew your certification you must participate in another 12 hours of conservation work in the field on a habitat or wildlife related project. As it now stands this conservation project can not be done any sooner than six months prior to your expiration date.

As proposed by the Focus Group, the

amount of time to renew your Master Hunter certification would jump from 12 hours to at least 30 hours. However, you would be able to spread the 30 hours over the entire five year period. As an example, you may put in six hours per year or put in 15 hours one year and none the next and 15 the third year, to reach the total hours needed. Any combination of hours will work as long as you total 30 hours by the end of your certification date.

One of the reasons behind the proposed increase in hours, is to increase Master

Hunter involvement in conservation issues, especially with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. AHE staff would like to promote the use of AHE Master Hunters, to form groups, to assist WDFW biologist with annual projects.

If you have any questions or comments on the proposed increase for re-certification, please contact Chuck Ray, Program Manager, at 509-745-4624 or e-mail [raycwr@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:raycwr@dfw.wa.gov). If you prefer to write a letter, please send it to Chuck Ray, WDFW 1550 Alder St. N.W. Ephrata, Washington 98823.

## NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION MODEL

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profound is that this doctrine relied on the taking of nature, not on simply viewing it. Somehow the free-wheeling utilitarianism of America found deep expression in a model of near religious empathy for nature that was no ephemeral fashion. Well over a century later, this phenomenal revolution rolls on, and many of its diverse doctrines can be traced to the founding years of mid-19th century America.

Hunter also initiated early perspectives on landscape diversity, valuing systems for their wildlife production and not just their aesthetics. Hunters understood the importance of wetlands long before it became hip to preserve swamps, bogs and potholes. To these practicing naturalist, an ecological perspective came...naturally. They appreciated the "seasonality" of wildlife and fish production, and were thus led to acknowledge the connectedness of landscapes and the importance of life history sequences. It made little sense to protect winter habitat of an animal but suffer the loss of its birthing or rearing sites. Furthermore, the limits of nature were understood in terms any wildlife manager of today would immediately grasp. Those who spent time pursuing wild things learned the challenge of doing so and, along the way, observed their competitors in action. The forces of weather, food and predation were not abstract or foreign to the hunter and angler; rather they were the everyday realities encountered by living creatures. Man's access to wild nature had to be prescribed within this framework and had to be calibrated by an ever-changing formula of production and decline. Change was constant and only by careful study could the measured, sustainable use of wildlife be undertaken. Around this conceptual corner lay the field of wildlife science, the forerunner of ecology and con-

servation biology.

Hunter were also the first to draw attention to the escalating effects of industrialization. These effects were particularly evident in the continent's waterways, where dams and pollutants of all sorts were drastically degrading water quality and where fish populations were declining at a calamitous pace due to commercial netters. The response of sportsmen to this crisis was direct and practical. They launched a restoration blitzkrieg that saw fish hatcheries emerge across the country in a seemingly contagious spasm. They poured letters and articles to the various sporting journals, forcing an awareness onto the public and political consciousness that for the first time in North America would translate into a coordinated national effort to deal with an environmental concern. The program and debate were so intense that in 1871, the same year that Henry M. Stanley found Dr. Livingstone, and a year before Yellowstone National Park was set aside, the United States Fish Commission was established.

This federal initiative was designed to evaluate the status of fish populations across the United States and along its coast, as well as to assist in coordinating restoration efforts. Working with state commissions and private hatcheries, the new federal agency declared that restoring wild nature was a mandate of national government, and, just as important, that it could be effectively undertaken. While it is true that many release of exotic fish species injured native stocks, it is also true that, once more, American hunters and anglers had moved beyond complaint to action and had, in fact done something of greater significance. They had jarred the country's very notion of itself, launching an engagement with a future that few could imagine. Somewhere between arriving and becoming, American society was mov-

ing-at least in its understanding of wild nature's value-from conqueror toward custodian.

Hunters and anglers for conservation! The movement was underway. Having discovered how long limb of passionate opinion works leverage in the halls of power, sportsmen nurtured their coalition of clubs, hatcheries, journals and gatherings into a movement with political force. While protecting their club's streams and hunting lands were regional undertakings designed to ensure hunters access to naturally abundant fish and game, their progress in securing wildlife legislation, in drawing attention to the trail of unfettered industrial progress, and in spurring the nation to responsible action over declining fish and wildlife populations identified hunters and anglers as champions of a wider, less selfish cause.

Hunters of wild nature had linked their notions of personal achievement to a sense of duty to the land and set forth an embryonic philosophy bursting with potential. Sportsmen, even if they are sometimes reluctant to admit it, were the very first environmentalists in North America. By the last decades of the 19th century, they were already a force to be reckoned with. All that was required to drive their fervor for nature into the nation's marrow was that essential ingredient without which no revolution can succeed: the hunter conservationists needed leaders larger than life. Essentially they required a move to power.

These articles originally appeared in *Bugle*, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's journal of elk country and the hunt. They appear here courtesy of Shane Hahoney and the Elk Foundation.

**A Newsletter For Graduates Of The  
Advanced Hunter Education Program**

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**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.clearlight.com/hunting](http://www.clearlight.com/hunting)**

*"Hunter Ethics, Hunter Safety"*

## **WDFW NEEDS HELP FROM MASTER HUNTERS !**



The future of hunting depends on how we, as Sportsmen, conduct ourselves...Ethics is our first priority!

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neys. Then remove the 2 middle incisor teeth (front teeth, bottom jaw). Finally, either remove the udder for later examination or carefully pull on the teats (essentially like milking a cow) and watch for fluid, which may be milk-like or clear (report the nature of any fluid when submit your sample). The 2004 edition of the WDFW published *Washington Hunting News - Game Trails Hunter News*, has color photos showing examples of good quality samples. During the general elk season, samples can be to the **Oak Creek Wildlife Area Visitor Center** (just west of the Hwy 12/Hwy

410 junction) or the **Yakima Regional WDFW Office** (1701 S. 24th Ave. Yakima). At other times, please call the phone number below to report a sample. Although sample collection will require a little extra effort on your part, you will be helping to assure sound biological management of Washington's elk herds. If you need more information, more detailed directions, or an organ location diagram, please call **509-575-2740** or **509-457-9322**.

**WDFW BIOLOGIST NEED YOUR HELP! PLEASE DO WHAT YOU CAN TO HELP THEM OUT IN FURTHERING THE HEALTH OF OUR ELK HERDS.**